

BUCEROS

ENVIS NEWSLETTER : AVIAN ECOLOGY AND INLAND WETLANDS

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BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

INAUGURAL ISSUE

In the fitness of things, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) was selected as an ENVIS (Environmental Information System) Centre by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India during the year of the Salim Ali Centenary celebrations. Though the BNHS did have quite a few other larger than life personalities as was Salim Ali, what made the 'old man' stand out was: 1) He was the first Indian pioneer in the field of ornithology and conservation; 2) He was instrumental in popularizing the study of ornithology through his evergreen bestseller **The Book of Indian Birds** and 3) His magnum opus, **The Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan**, co-authored with S.D. Ripley.

The ENVIS centre at BNHS will deal with information on 'Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands'. The choice of BNHS for such a centre is understandable, as it has been related in one way or another with studies on ornithology, natural history and conservation. Another distinction is the publication of its journal, **The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society** since 1886, which is a required reading for studies on any aspect of the ecology of the subcontinent. Besides these, the Society has a large collection of books, scientific journals and bird skins, some of which are more than a century old and available nowhere else. It has a team of experienced scientists, both professional and amateur, many of whom were pioneers in scientific studies on birds in India.

This issue of the Newsletter, being the inaugural issue, is devoted to information on the recently setup ENVIS Centre at the BNHS. It gives the reasons for naming the Newsletter **Buceros** and discusses the objectives and plans of the Centre. It also provides information on the Society: its history, growth, future plans, activities and publications.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ENVIS CENTRE AT BNHS

The primary objective of all ENVIS centres is to collect, collate, store and disseminate environmental information to various user groups, including policy planners, decision makers, researchers and the layman. The Focal Point of the present 21 ENVIS centres in India is at the Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi. This ENVIS Focal Point acts as a regional service centre to INFOTERRA (International Information System on Environment) set up by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to cater to environmental information needs in the South Asian Region.

As mentioned earlier, the Centre at the BNHS has been assigned the responsibility of being the focal point for information on 'Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands'. The plans envisaged for the ENVIS Centre at BNHS are:

- 1) To create a bibliographic database of published work related to Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands. This will access information from scientific papers, notes, project reports, theses, books, bulletins and popular publications.
- 2) To create a database of organisations (governmental and non-governmental) related to work on Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands, including a database of scientists in these organisations and their areas of specialisation.
- 3) Publish newsletters and reports pertaining to Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands.

**auguration of the ENVIS centre at BNHS by Mr. N.R. Krishnan, Secretary,
Ministry of Environment and Forests on 18.6.1996**

BUCEROS

With this inaugural issue, the ENVIS newsletter published by the BNHS will take the name of **BUCEROS**. *Buceros*, to those unfamiliar, is the genus under which the Great Hornbill (Great Indian Pied Hornbill) is classified. The Great Hornbill is the crest or logo of the BNHS. The Society already has a popular publication, **HORNBILL** named after its mascot.

To honour our mascot's more than half a century's relationship with the Society, which has seen the Society become one of the premier research and conservation organisations in the country, we have decided to honour our mascot once again. As it is not possible to have two publications with the same name, we

take recourse to using the generic name, *Buceros* for the Newsletter as its output will be mainly of a scientific nature. We are certain that the distinctions that our mascot has brought us will continue - after all it is the same old bird under another name!

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Bombay Natural History Society was founded in 1883 for the purpose of exchanging notes and observations on natural history and exhibiting specimens. Today, it is the largest non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the subcontinent engaged in the conservation of nature and natural resources, education and research in natural history, with members in 30 countries. The Society's guiding principle has always been that conservation must be based on scientific research - a tradition exemplified by its late president, Dr. Salim Ali.

Collection: Much of today's information on the wildlife of India and neighbouring countries during the British Raj was collected by the BNHS. The Society's collection of specimens of over 26,000 birds, 20,000 mammals, 7,500 reptiles and amphibians, 50,000 insects and 8,000 plants is recognised for both its quality and antiquity, and has been recognised as a National Heritage collection. Several extinct species are represented in the collection.

Library: The library at Hornbill House has a large collection of books and scientific journals on wildlife and the environment, including century-old books on shikar and rare natural history lithographs that are not available elsewhere.

Nature Education: The Society's Nature Education Wing reaches over 10,000 students each year. With our recent tie-up with the Overseas Development Administration, U.K., environmental education activity has taken off with the launching of major innovative programmes aimed at building participative support of the local people in solving environmental issues.

Conservation: The Salim Ali Nature Conservation Fund (SANCF) creates awareness among target groups. Training programmes are conducted for officers of the Indian Army, IAS, IFS, journalists, etc. It also funds conservation oriented research projects.

University Department: Since 1957, the BNHS has been affiliated as a Post Graduate Department with the University of Bombay for field studies in Zoology and Botany. It also runs a diploma course in Natural History and has just started a correspondence course in Ornithology.

Research: The BNHS has pioneered the study of the Indian fauna starting with the Mammal Survey of the Subcontinent and adjoining states of Burma (Myanmar) and Sri Lanka between the years 1913 and 1923. Subsequently, the Society studied the Avifauna of the Subcontinent starting with a survey of the Avifauna of the Eastern Ghats followed by surveys of the Avifauna of the then states of Hyderabad, Travancore, Cochin, Mysore, states of Central India, Gujarat, Orissa, Berar, Goa, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Bhutan - all by Dr. Salim Ali. The Andamans and Nicobar Islands were extensively surveyed by Mr. Humayun Abdulali, presently the doyen among Indian ornithologists. All the material and data are housed at the Society.

The Society had also undertaken a number of projects on the study of many endangered species of wildlife and their habitats. Notable among these, were the projects on the Asian elephant, Great Indian Bustard, Lesser Florican, Bengal Florican, Jerdon's Courser, bird migration studies, the study on bird hazards to aircrafts and ecosystem studies at Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary and Keoladeo National Park. The BNHS now has a Bird Hazard Research cell and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) cell, and also has a number of ongoing and proposed field based projects.

Publications

Books

- 1) The Book of Indian Birds - Salim Ali.
- 2) A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan - S.D. Ripley.
- 3) Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan - Salim Ali & S.D. Ripley
- 4) A Pictorial Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent - Salim Ali & S.D. Ripley.

- 5) Checklist of the Birds of Maharashtra - H. Abdulali.
- 6) Checklist of the Birds of Delhi, Bharatpur and Agra - H. Abdulali & J.P. Panday
- 7) Potential Problem Birds at Indian Aerodromes - R.B. Grubh & Salim Ali.
- 8) Waterfowl Indicator - S.A. Hussain & Carl D' Silva.
- 9) The Great Indian Bustard - A.R. Rahmani
- 10) A Guide to the Cranes of India - P. Gole
- 11) The Book of Indian Animals - S.H. Prater.
- 12) The Book of Indian Reptiles - J.C. Daniel.
- 13) Some Beautiful Indian Climbers and Shrubs - N.L. Bor & M.B. Raizada.
- 14) Some Beautiful Indian Trees - E. Blatter & W.S. Millard.
- 15) A Century of Natural History - J.C. Daniel (Ed.).
- 16) Encyclopedia of Indian Natural History - R.E. Hawkins (Ed.).
- 17) Conservation in Developing Countries - Problems and Prospects - J.C. Daniel & J.S. Serrao (Eds.).
- 18) Glimpses of Nature Series Booklet. Our animals (with 8 coloured plates) in Gujarati.
- 19) A Week With Elephants - J.C. Daniel & Hemant Datye (Eds.).

Books under preparation

- 20) Book of Indian Trees - K.C. Sahni.
- 21) Illustrated Flora of Keoladeo National Park - V.P. Prasad, D. Mason, Joy E. Marburger and C.R. Ajithkumar.
- 22) Book of Indian Butterflies - N. Chaturvedi & I. Kehimkar.
- 23) Book of Indian Shells - Deepak Apte.
- 24) Seaside Stories - B.F. Chhapgar.

Project Reports

- 1) Ecological reconnaissance of Vedaranyam Swamp, Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu (1980) - Salim Ali.
- 2) Studies on the movement and population structure of Indian avifauna. Annual Reports I & II (1980-81, 1981-82) - Salim Ali & S.A. Hussain.
- 3) Studies on the movement and population structure of Indian avifauna. Annual Report (1984-85) - Salim Ali & R. Sugathan.
- 4) Studies on the movement and population structure of Indian avifauna. Annual Report (1985-86) - Salim Ali.
- 5) Bird Migration Project. Annual Reports: 1987-88, 1988-89 & 1990-1991 - S. A. Hussain
- 6) An ecological study of bird hazard at Indian aerodromes: Phase 1. Final Report - Salim Ali & Robert B. Grubb.
- 7) An ecological study of bird hazard at Indian aerodromes: Phase 2. (1989). Final Report: Part one (Summary of the findings and recommendations) & Part two (17 volumes) - Robert B. Grubb
- 8) Study of the ecology of some endangered species of wildlife and their habitats: The Great Indian Bustard: Annual Reports 1 & 2 (1982 & 1984) - Salim Ali & Asad R. Rahmani.
- 9) Study of the ecology of some endangered species of wildlife and their habitats: The Great Indian Bustard (1986). Annual Report 3 (1985-86) - Ranjit Manakadan & Asad R. Rahmani.
- 10) The Great Indian Bustard. Final Report (1989) - Asad R. Rahmani.
- 11) Strategy for conservation of bustards in Maharashtra (1984). Technical Report No. 3 - Salim Ali, J.C. Daniel, Asad R. Rahmani and Ranjit Manakadan.
- 12) Threats to the Karera Bustard Sanctuary: Recommendations for Conservation (1985). Technical Report No. 6 - Asad R. Rahmani, Bharat Bhushan & Eric D'Cunha.
- 13) The Great Indian Bustard in Gujarat (1985). Technical Report No.7. (Endangered Species Project) - Salim Ali, J.C. Daniel and Asad R. Rahmani.
- 14) Status of the Great Indian Bustard in Madhya Pradesh (1994)- Asad R. Rahmani.
- 15) Status of the Great Indian bustard in Rajasthan (1986). Technical Report No. 11 - Asad R. Rahmani.
- 16) Bustard Sanctuaries of India (1987). Technical Report No. 13 - Asad R. Rahmani &

Ranjit Manakadan.

- 17)The Lesser Florican in Sailana, Madhya Pradesh (1984). Technical Report No. 2 - Salim Ali, J.C. Daniel, Asad R. Rahmani, Usha Bhutia & Meena Haribal.
- 18)The Floricans (1985). Annual Report 1: 1984-85 - Salim Ali, J. C. Daniel & Asad R. Rahmani.
- 19)The Floricans (1989). Annual Report: 1988-89 - Goutam Narayan, Ravi Sankaran Lima Rosalind & Asad R. Rahmani.
- 20)The Lesser Florican (1986). Annual Report 2 (1985-86)- Ravi Sankaran & Asad R. Rahmani.
- 21)The Bengal Florican (1988). Annual Report 1986-87 - Asad R. Rahmani, Goutam Narayan, Ravi Sankaran and Lima Rosalind.
- 22)Status and ecology of the Lesser and Bengal floricans with reports on Jerdon's Courser and Mountain Quail. Final Report (1990)- Dr. Salim Ali, J.C. Daniel, Asad R. Rahmani, Goutam Narayan, Ravi Sankaran, Lima Rosalind, Bharat Bhushan and Usha Ganguli Lachungpa.
- 23)Study of the ecology of some endangered species of wildlife and their habitats (1985): Jerdon's or Double-Banded Courser: Preliminary survey: Pennar river valley, Andhra Pradesh. Technical Report No. 9- Salim Ali, J.C. Daniel, Asad R. Rahmani and Bharat Bhushan.
- 24)Blacknecked Crane in Ladakh. First Annual Report (1986) - Salim Ali, J.C. Daniel & Mir Inayatullah.
- 25)Blacknecked Crane in Ladakh. Second Annual Report (1987) - J.C. Daniel, A.R. Wani & Asad Akhtar.
- 26)Ecology and behaviour of resident raptors with special reference to endangered species. Annual Reports: 1991, 1992 & Final Report (1995) - J.C. Daniel, Vibhu Prakash & Rishad Naoroji.
- 27)The Asian Elephant: Annual Report (1985-87) - J. C. Daniel, A.A. Desai, N. Sivaganesan & S. Ramesh Kumar.
- 28)Telemetry study of the Asian elephant (1993) - J. C. Daniel, Ajay A. Desai, N. Baskaran, S. Swaminathan and M. Balasubramanian.
- 29)Ecology of the Asian Elephant (1995). Final Report (1987-1992) - J.C. Daniel, V. Krishnamurthy, A.A. Desai, N. Sivaganesan, Hemant S. Datye, Ramesh Kumar, N . Baskaran, M. Balasubramanian and S. Swaminathan.

- 30) Status survey of the wild Asiatic Buffalo in the Raipur and Bastar districts of Madhya Pradesh (1988). SANCF Report No.3 - H.K. Divekar and Bharat Bhushan.
- 31) Status of the Swamp Deer in Dudwa National Park (1989). Technical Report No. 14. - R. Sankaran.
- 32) Keoladeo National Park Ecological Study (1991) - Final Report: 1980-1990 - V.S. Vijayan.
- 33) Recommendations for management of Keoladeo National Park (1985) - Salim Ali and V.S. Vijayan.
- 34) Ecology of Point Calimere Wildlife and Birds Sanctuary (1994). Final Report (1988-1991) - J.C. Daniel & Y.N. Rao.
- 35) A study on the ecology of grasslands of the Indian plains with particular reference to their endangered fauna. Annual Reports: 1992-93, 1993-94, 1994-95 & Final Report (in press) - Asad R. Rahmani.
- 36) The proposed galvanne plant of General Engineering Works, Bharatpur and the Keoladeo National Park - An impact assessment (1987) - V.S. Vijayan.
- 37) Restoration of birdlife in a portion of the Parsik hill range through reforestation. (1991). Report submitted to NOCIL - Robert B. Grubh.
- 38) Suraha Tal : An ecological assessment (1991) - Lalitha Vijayan, P.A. Azeez, C.R. Ajith Kumar and M.N. Haque.
- 39) Environmental impact of the proposed lignite mining project at Barsingsar, Rajasthan, with reference to birdlife (1992). An EIA report for Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited, Rajasthan Lignite Project- Robert B. Grubh.
- 40) Environmental survey of NOCIL afforestation area at Parsik hills (1995) Report submitted to National Organic Chemical Industries Limited - Naresh Chaturvedi, Alex Abraham, P.B. Sekar, Isaac Kehimkar and Vibhu Prakash.
- 41) Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary- An Ecological Assessment (1995). EIA Report submitted to AIC Watson Consultants Limited, Bombay.
- 42) Preliminary environmental assessment study of pumped storage hydro electric scheme at Hewale. (1996). EIA Report submitted to Irrigation Department, Government of Maharashtra.
- 43) Ponds and forests for prosperity and posterity : An environmental awareness course (1992). Robert B. Grubh and Shailaja R. Grubh.
- 44) Conservation Education Project: Baseline Survey Report (1994).

- 45) Conservation Education Project: Final Report (in press). 4 - S.A. Hussain, K.K. Mohapatra and Sahid Ali. Evergreen Forest in Point Calimere Sanctuary (1984) Tech.
- 46) Dihaila Jheel Conservation strategies. (1987). Technical Report No. 12. Asad R. Rahmani.
- 47) Avifaunal profile of Chilka lake: A case for conservation (1984). Technical Report No. 1 (Avifauna) - S. A. Hussain, R. Sugathan & P. Balasubramanian.
- 50) *Prosopis juliflora* - Profile of an exotic in the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest of Point Calimere (1984). Technical Report No 5 (Avifauna) - V. Natarajan, R. Sugathan & S.A. Hussain.